

# **Task Force on Wildland-Urban Interface Guidelines**

## **Minutes from Meeting December 14, 2007**

### **Helena**

#### **Present:**

Pat Cross	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Casey Johnston	Northwestern Energy
Dan McGowan	Disaster and Emergency Services
Pat McKelvey	Fire Safe Montana / Lewis & Clark County
Ted Mead	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Bill Meadows	Montana Farm Bureau
Glenn Oppel	Montana Association of Realtors
Bruce Suenram	Fire Logistics, Inc.
Steve Turkiewicz	Montana Bankers Association
Lowell Whitney	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Facilitator: John Moore

The meeting convened at 10:05 a.m.

### **By consensus, the group reached these decisions:**

1. Set the agenda for the meeting:
  - a. Discuss whether to rewrite existing guidelines or use another code
  - b. Set goals – activities – timelines
  - c. Public comment period
2. Agreed to focus on three existing documents as the possible starting points for new guidelines.
3. Developed a plan to adopt rules under Senate Bill 51 for Fire Protection Guidelines for Wildland-Urban Interface

#### **Goal / Activity**

#### **Timeline**

A. Post these documents on DNRC web site and mail them out:

1/2/08

- 1993 Guidelines
- IWUIC
- NFPA 1144

B. Hold a meeting of the task force  
agenda items

2/6/08

- get input from organizations on accuracy of existing documents
- get ideas on criteria encouraging best practices tied to loans and grants to local governments
- determine further meetings

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| C. Using the three agreed documents, draft administrative rules for adoption by reference | 4/15/08          |
| D. Publish proposal notice for rules  | 5/30/08          |
| • focus of rules under DNRC authority:  |                  |
| 1. access / egress, water supply, defensible space  |                  |
| 2. criteria for best practices tied to loans and grants to local governments              |                  |
| E. Hold hearing; close comment period   | to be determined |
| F. Publish adoption notice for rules  | 10/31/08         |

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

## **Discussion Summary** – these are points brought up during the meeting

### **Discuss whether to rewrite existing guidelines or use another code**

- What about Department of Labor and Industry? They need to write ARM on construction techniques – we need more players here
- Under SB51, section 4, DNRC has authority over these areas: access / egress, water supply, defensible area – there's some overlap with DLI on roofing materials and siding materials
- Most codes dealing with access, water, etc., also deal with construction techniques
- In SB51 hearings, separate jurisdiction of areas went to DNRC and DLI
- We're not clear on DLI's timeline – overall, SB51 says rules have to be in place by 10/1/09
- Not dealing with statutory requirements, rather "best practices"
- We don't know DLI plans; maybe DLI is looking at a timeline later in 2009
- Purpose of October 2009 deadline – to explore possible other options; have needed time; maybe changes in 2009 session
- Rules may be adopted prior to 10/1/09
- Construction techniques have to be tied to authority
- How do these tie to county building codes?
- Only four counties have codes
- The rules will serve as a model for local government, not a mandate
- Local governments may do this, but most haven't (only four)
- Local government must look to DLI for construction guidance
- Building components need to be synched up or separated
- Anything close to 1993 Guidelines or other code must involve DLI for construction techniques – they have to be synched up
- DNRC must focus in areas other than construction techniques
- Two areas: DNRC rules, DLI rules – DLI must build separate standards, not part of building code
- We should build this together, merge efforts and ARM processes

- MACO will be involved – they've started the project of developing uniform guidelines – not zoning, but standard recommendations, a state-wide mandate
- Does MACO's effort make SB51 moot?
- From insurance standpoint, we need to put the cost of risk abatement on landowners, not taxpayers
- Mitigating fire risk should fall to the developers and landowners; their incentive is approval for projects; the rules need force and effect
- Should we work on a plan and get it to other players?
- We should focus on our timeline and involve others
- Pick an end date and work back from there to determine what we need to do
- Deal with mandate of SB51, set timelines
- DNRC doesn't have draft rules for SB51, section 4; the goal has been to rewrite 1993 Guidelines and adopt them by reference
- What's the problem to address? Have uniform standards, rather than patchwork of local government requirements
- Existing 1993 Guidelines – ever adopted? In some areas, such as Flathead County
- There seem to be a lot of balls spinning on this

### **Goals – activities – timelines**

- DNRC will post the three documents on web site and mail them out by 1/2/08
- Get input from organizations on accuracy of existing documents – meeting 2/6/08
  - Contractors, builders, local fire chiefs association, Montana Association of Planners, MACO, State Auditor
  - Get ideas about criteria encouraging best practices – tied to loans and grants to local governments
  - Determine further meetings
- Work from three documents to build the draft ARM for adoption by reference by 4/15/08
  - 1993 Guidelines
  - IWUIC
  - NFPA 1144
- Publish proposal notice for rules by 5/30/08
  - DNRC focus: access / egress, water supply, defensible space
  - criteria for loans and grants to local governments – separate issue, but concurrent timeline
- Publish adoption notice for rules by 10/31/08
  - close comment period                      TBD
  - hold hearing                                      TBD